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STATE FOR OES, OES/EGC, IO, IO/EDA  
NSC PASS TO CEQ - JCONNAUGHTON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [KGHG](#) [ECON](#) [UNGA](#)  
SUBJECT: UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE: JULY  
31-AUG 1

REF: A. USUN NEW YORK 302  
[1](#)B. USUN NEW YORK 314

[1](#)1. (SBU) General Assembly President (PGA) Sheikha Haya al-Khalifa informed missions in a June 9 letter that the GA informal thematic debate "Climate Change as a global challenge" has now been officially scheduled for July 31-August 1. The GA debate had been requested by the New York Committee of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with the support of the European Union (EU), and the new dates no longer conflict with the July meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council in Geneva. (Comment: ASEAN has told us informally that the purpose of the debate is simply to have the GA reassert its "ownership" of climate change following the provocative and divisive UK decision to have a Security Council debate on the subject this past April; ref [1](#)A. End comment.)

[1](#)2. (U) The PGA letter described the purpose of the two-day informal debate as "raising awareness and (building) momentum on climate change, in particular, in preparation for the Secretary-General's High-level event in September" (ref B).

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The format will be a brief opening ceremony followed by two expert panels on a range of climate issues, with the second day devoted to an ad hoc general discussion. The Secretary-General's Climate Change Envoys will participate.

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The SYG's office will also prepare a "factual background paper" as input to the debate, to be made available in the near future.

[1](#)3. (SBU) USUN recommends adopting the same low-key approach to this event as we took in the April UNSC debate and at other recent GA thematic debates on other topics. USUN will consult with the Secretariat to try to ensure that panelists are a serious and balanced group of experts rather than celebrities with political agendas.  
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